

CLAIMS

- 1           1. A method comprising:
- 2                 placing a predetermined solder pattern onto a pad provided on a substrate; and
- 3                 heating said predetermined solder pattern, wherein a visual appearance of said heated
- 4     predetermined solder pattern being indicative of whether said solder is lead-free.
- 1           2. The method of claim 1, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit board.
- 1           3. The method of claim 1, wherein placing said predetermined solder pattern comprises passing
- 2     solder through at least one stencil aperture and onto said pad.
- 1           4. The method of claim 1, wherein said predetermined solder pattern comprises at least one
- 2     symbol.
- 1           5. The method of claim 1, wherein placing said predetermined solder pattern comprises placing
- 2     solder at one end of an indicator strip.
- 1           6. The method of claim 1, further comprising examining said heated predetermined solder pattern
- 2     to determine if said solder is lead-free.
- 1           7. The method of claim 6, wherein examining said heated predetermined solder pattern comprises

2 visually identifying whether said predetermined solder pattern after heating is in substantially a same  
3 pattern as said predetermined solder pattern before heating.

1 8. The method of claim 6, wherein examining said heated predetermined solder pattern comprises  
2 determining whether an amount of reflow is greater than a predetermined amount.

1 9. A method comprising:  
2 providing a pad on a substrate;  
3 placing solder on said pad; and  
4 heating said solder so as to create reflow, a visual appearance of said heated solder being  
5 indicative of whether said solder is lead-free.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit board.

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein placing said solder on said pad comprises passing said solder  
2 through at least one stencil aperture and onto said pad.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said solder is placed onto said pad in a predetermined  
2 pattern.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said predetermined pattern comprises at least one symbol.

14. The method of claim 9, further comprising identifying whether said solder is lead-free based on an amount of reflow of said heated solder.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein identifying whether said solder is lead-free comprises visually identifying whether said solder after reflow is in substantially the same predetermined pattern as before reflow.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein identifying said solder as lead-free comprises determining whether an amount of reflow is greater than a predetermined amount.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said determining is based on a distance of reflow along said pad.

18. The method of claim 9, wherein placing said solder on said pad comprises placing solder at one end of an indicator strip.

1 19. A method of identifying whether a printed circuit board is lead-free, said method

2 comprising:

3 receiving said printed circuit board having a heated solder pattern formed thereon; and

4 identifying whether solder on said printed circuit board is lead-free based on whether said

5 heated solder pattern is substantially similar to a predetermined solder pattern.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said predetermined solder pattern comprises at least one  
2 of a symbol and a character.

1 21. The method of claim 19, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to  
2 be lead-free if said heated solder pattern is substantially similar to said predetermined solder pattern.

1 22. The method of claim 19, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to  
2 not be lead-free if said heated solder pattern substantially differs from said predetermined solder  
3 pattern.

1 23. A method of identifying whether a printed circuit board is lead-free, said method

2 comprising:

3 receiving said printed circuit board having a heated solder pattern formed thereon; and

4 identifying whether solder on said printed circuit board is lead-free based on a distance that

5 said solder reflows.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein said identifying comprising comparing a distance that

said solder reflows with at least one indicator provided on said printed circuit board.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to be lead-free if said solder has not reflowed further than said at least one indicator.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to not be lead-free if said solder has reflowed further than said at least one indicator.

27. A printed circuit board comprising:  
a substrate having a plurality of first pads; and  
a second pad formed on said substrate; and  
a identifying solder pattern formed on said second pad, wherein said identifying solder pattern visually indicates whether solder used to form said identifying solder pattern is lead-free.

28. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said identifying solder pattern comprises a symbol after reflow of said solder.

29. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said identifying solder pattern comprises a non-symbol created by reflow of solder from a previous symbol.

30. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit board.